

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSO-00

SS-15 NSCE-00 NSC-05 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SAB-01 SAM-01 (ISO) R

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APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

NEA/ARN - MR. BULLEN

NEA/ARP - MR. AHERNE

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCEUR

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL
CINCEUR FOR POLAD

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR
JANUARY 20, 1976:

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US ANY ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN
LEBANON? DOES THE UNITED STATES HAVE ANY INDEPENDENT
INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND?

A. WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT SOME PALESTINIAN REINFORCEMENTS
HAVE ENTERED LEBANON FROM SYRIA. I AM UNABLE TO GO INTO
DETAILS OR SPECIFIC NUMBERS, BUT I WILL SAY THAT WE
BELIEVE THE FIGURES IN THE PRESS RANGING BETWEEN, I THINK,
5,000 AND 15,000 ARE EXAGGERATED.

Q. HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE ARE PALESTINIANS AND NOT
SYRIANS?

A. I REALLY AM UNABLE TO, I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GO

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INTO HOW WE KNOW. I CAN'T GO INTO DETAILS OR SPECIFICS
ON THE NUMBERS. NOW, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SYRIAN
MILITARY UNITS ENTERING LEBANON, AND WE NATURALLY CONTINUE
TO WATCH THE SITUATION THERE CLOSELY.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY SOME PALESTINIANS, DO YOU MEAN A FEW
HUNDRED, A FEW SCORE, OR WHAT?

A. I MEAN SOME. I SAY I AM UNABLE EITHER TO GO INTO THE NUMBERS OR TO CHARACTERIZE THE RANGE. I HAVE SAID THAT WE THINK 5,000 TO 15,000 WHICH HAS BEEN REPORTED IS AN EXAGGERATION.

Q. HOW DO YOU VIEW THE ENTRY OF SOME PALESTINIANS INTO LEBANON?

A. WE HAVE SUPPORTED, AND WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT, THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS FOR A CEASE-FIRE IN LEBANON, AND WE HAVE URGED RESTRAINT, AS WE HAVE SAID, I THINK, A NUMBER OF TIMES BEFORE, ON ALL OF THE PARTIES TO THE FIGHTING. SO IT STANDS TO REASON THAT WE OPPOSE THE ESCALATION OF THE CONFLICT FROM WHATEVER SOURCE.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO A SOLUTION WHICH PRESERVES THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON, ITS NATIONAL UNITY AND COHESION. WE ARE OPPOSED TO THE PARTITION OF LEBANON. WE ARE ALSO OPPOSED TO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE FROM ANY QUARTER.

Q. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH SYRIA'S RESTRAINT IN THIS MATTER, POINTING OUT, I ASSUME, THAT THE PLA COULDN'T CROSS THE BORDER WITHOUT SYRIAN ASSENT?

A. I HAVE GIVEN YOU OUR GENERAL VIEWS, AND IT'S A DELICATE MATTER, AND WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH ALL THE PARTIES OBVIOUSLY, AND I REALLY PREFER NOT TO GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE SAID.

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SITUATION, AND EVERYBODY CONCERNED IS AWARE OF OUR VIEWS.

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Q. THE INTERIOR MINISTER HAS ASKED FOR AMERICAN INTERVENTION. WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE?

A. I HAVE SEEN THE REPORT, BUT WE HAVEN'T HAD ANY REQUEST FROM THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. AND I NOTE ALSO THAT THE LEBANESE AMBASSADOR TO THE UN IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT HE KNOWS NOTHING OF ANY SUCH REQUEST.

IN ANY CASE, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE NOT GIVING ANY CONSIDERATION TO UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN LEBANON.

Q. THERE WAS A REPORT THIS MORNING IN ISRAEL THAT PRIME MINISTER RABIN MIGHT POSTPONE HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF THE ACUTENESS OF THE SITUATION. DO

YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

A. I HAVE SEEN THE REPORT THAT HE MIGHT, AND OBVIOUSLY THAT IS A DECISION FOR HIM. WE DO NOT KNOW OF ANY DECISION, OR HE CERTAINLY HASN'T COMMUNICATED ANY TO US. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING HIM TO THE UNITED STATES NEXT WEEK.

Q. WHAT DAY IS HE SUPPOSED TO COME?

A. I DON'T RECALL OFFHAND. I THINK IT'S THE 26TH, 27TH, OR 28TH, SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT.

Q. NOW, YOU SAID, "WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SYRIAN MILITARY UNITS ENTERING. DO YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF ANY SYRIANS ENTERING, WHETHER THEY ARE MILITARY UNITS OR NOT?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE WE DO. I CAN'T SPECIFICALLY ANSWER YOU, BUT I DON'T THINK WE DO HAVE ANY EVIDENCE LIKE THAT.

Q. JOYN, DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION? IS KARAME RETURNING OR NOT LEAVING?

A. I DON'T.

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Q. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON KARAME HIMSELF? SHOULD HE STAY, WOULD THAT BE HELPFUL?

A. HE HAS OFFERED HIS RESIGNATION, OR HAD OFFERED IT IN THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS, AND WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO REMAIN IN OFFICE. AND AS YOU KNOW, AND AS I HAVE SAID HERE JUST NOW, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HIS EFFORTS TO END THE FIGHTING AND FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

THE SECRETARY SET OUT OUR GOALS IN A LETTER TO PREMIER KARAME LAST NOVEMBER, WHICH WE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT AN END TO THE FIGHTING DEMANDS THAT ALL CONCERNED SHOW MODERATION AND THE

SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE ESSENTIAL TO THE BEGINNING OF POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION.

Q. THAT SOUNDS AS IF YOU WISH KARAMI WOULD STAY THEN.

A. I DON'T REALLY THINK I -- I THINK WE SUPPORTED HIM. I

THINK WE WISHED THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON WELL. WE HAVE SAID THAT. I HAVE NO SPECIFIC COMMENT IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION. IT IS REALLY UP TO THE LEBANESE TO WORK OUT THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. WE HOPE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES PROVIDING AID TO ANY POLITICAL GROUP IN LEBANON?

A. I THINK WE HAVE SAID THAT WE ARE NOT PROVIDING AID. I GUESS YOU MEAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

Q. NO, I MEAN ANY KIND OF AID -- POLITICAL AID.

A. I THINK WE DID HAVE A SMALL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. MILITARY AID, WE HAVE NOT SENT MILITARY AID TO ANY OF THE GROUPS INVOLVED IN THAT SITUATION.

Q. WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT IS MORE LIKE THE AID WE USED TO UNCLASSIFIED

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GIVE TO THE ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTIES, PORTUGUESE, THAT SORT OF THING.

A. I JUST DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT FOR YOU.

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